

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 SANTIA 01734 01 OF 02 051723Z

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ACTION ARA-06

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FM AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7524

INFO USMISSION GENEVA

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 SANTIAGO 1734

LIMDIS

FOR ASSISTANT SECRETARY ROGERS AND AMB. MAILLIARD FROM POPPER

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, OAS, SHUM, CI

SUBJECT: SUBSTANTIVE PREPARATIONS FOR OASGA; HUMAN RIGHTS

1. AS WE BEGIN TO FOCUS ON JUNE MEETING OF OAS GENERAL ASSEMBLY, WE WOULD LIKE TO START INFORMAL DISCUSSIONS WITH GOC ON SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES WHICH WILL ARISE. WE ARE, HOWEVER, SOMEWHAT HANDICAPPED BY LACK OF PROVISIONAL AGENDA AND OF BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE ON OASGA PROCEEDINGS. WE ASSUME THAT AGENDA WILL DISCLOSE RANGE OF MORE OR LESS ROUTINE TOPICS ON WHICH USG WILL WANT GOC'S ADVANCE VIEWS. IN ADDITION, AT SOME STAGE WE WOULD ENGAGE THE CHILEANS ON PROPOSAL THE SECRETARY MADE IN VENEZUELA THAT OASGA CONSIDER THE FUNDAMENTAL NATURE OF THE INTER-AMERICAN RELATIONSHIP, PERHAPS IN CONNECTION WITH OAS CHARTER REFORM, AND ALSO ON COLOMBIAN FONMIN LIEVANO'S PROPOSAL FOR A NEW STUDY OF WESTERN HEMISPHERE TRADE RELATIONS.

2. AS FAR AS WE KNOW, GOC HAS NOT YET GIVEN CONSIDERATION TO THESE OR OTHER SUBSTANTIVE ASPECTS OF THE SANTIAGO GENERAL ASSEMBLY. I EXPECT TO SEE FONMIN CARVAJAL NEXT WEEK AND WILL SEE WHAT WE CAN GET FROM HIM ON THE SUBJECT. MEANWHILE, ANY INDICATION OF WASHINGTON THINKING WOULD BE HELPFUL.

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 SANTIA 01734 01 OF 02 051723Z

3. WE BELIEVE THE GOC HAS TWO OVERRIDING INTERESTS IN CONNECTION WITH THE ASSEMBLY. THE FIRST IS TO DEMONSTRATE FOR ALL THOSE ATTENDING THAT LIFE IN CHILE IS NORMAL, AND THAT CONDITIONS DO NOT RESEMBLE THOSE REPORTED AT LENGTH IN THE INTERNATIONAL PRESS, AS REPEATED IN CHILEAN NEWSPAPERS.

4. AS MATTERS NOW STAND IN CHILE, THE JUNTA MAY VERY WELL ACHIEVE THIS OBJECTIVE AMONG THOSE CONTENT WITH WHAT THEY SEE ON THE STREETS OR IN THEIR MEETINGS WITH CHILEANS WITH WHOM THEY ARE THROWN INTO CONTACT. OTHERS WHO TAKE THE TIME TO DIG DEEPER, OR WHO COME TO CHILE WITH PRECONCEIVED NOTIONS, WILL NOT HAVE MUCH TROUBLE, IN THIS QUITE OPEN SOCIETY, IN CORROBORATING WHAT THEY HAVE HEARD ABOUT THE NATURE OF CHILE'S INTERNAL SECURITY MACHINERY. THEIR VIEWS MIGHT BE STRENGTHENED BY A FLASH DEMONSTRATION OF OPPOSITION -- SAY, BY A MASSIVE CLIMBING OF FOREIGN EMBASSY WALLS TO SEEK ASYLUM, OR BY A ONE-TIME STREET DEMONSTRATION OR ACT OF VIOLENCE OF SOME SORT. GOC MUST HAVE DECIDED TO ACCEPT THIS RISK WHEN IT PRESSED FOR A SANTIAGO MEETING. WE THINK THE RISK IS SMALL. GOC COULD CERTAINLY CONTROL ANY MAJOR SHOW OF DISSENT.

5. SECOND CHILEAN INTEREST IN THE ASSEMBLY AS WE ASSESS IT IS TO EMERGE WITH LEAST POSSIBLE DAMAGE IN HUMAN RIGHTS AREA. AT LAST YEAR'S OASGA, IT WILL BE RECALLED, WE GOT CHILEANS OFF THE HOOK BY INVOKING THE IMPENDING VISIT OF THE UN HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION WORKING GROUP, LATER ABORTED. WE ASSUME THAT THIS YEAR WE WOULD NOT RESORT TO SUCH A DEVICE EVEN IF WE COULD; AND THERE IS STILL NO CLEAR SIGN THAT PRESIDENT PINOCHET IS WILLING TO COME TO TERMS WITH THE WORKING GROUP.

6. HERE AND IN WASHINGTON, MANY OF US HAVE BEEN CONSIDERING WAYS IN WHICH THE INTER-AMERICAN HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION MIGHT TAKE UP WHERE THE UN WORKING GROUP LEFT OFF. THE CHILEANS HAVE EVERY REASON TO PREFER THE INTER-AMERICAN COMMISSION. WHILE ITS 1974 REPORT ON HUMAN RIGHTS IN CHILE ADDED UP TO A DAMNING DOCUMENT, ITS TONE WAS CERTAINLY LESS OFFENSIVE THAN THAT OF THE UN WORKING GROUP'S LATEST REPORT. WE ARE SURE CHILEANS WOULD RATHER PUT THEIR TRUST IN FOREIGN OBSERVERS FROM THE AMERICAN STATES THAN IN A MORE HETEROGENEOUS GROUP MORE STRONGLY INFLUENCED BY RADICAL THIRD-WORLDEERS. AND
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 SANTIAGO 01734 01 OF 02 051723Z

CHILEANS KNOW THEY WOULD STAND TO GAIN FROM INNATE LATIN AMERICAN SENSITIVITY TO ANYTHING SMACKING OF INTERVENTION IN DOMESTIC AFFAIRS.

7. THESE FACTORS STRENGTHEN OUR VIEW THAT IT WOULD BE WORTH WHILE FOR THE USG DISCREETLY TO SEEK TO ARRANGE AN INTER-AMERICAN HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION VISIT TO CHILE BEFORE THE OASGA. WE RECOGNIZE THAT COMMISSION MEMBERS ARE ANYTHING BUT

EAGER TO UNDERTAKE THE TASK. NEVERTHELESS WE WONDER IF IT COULD NOT BE SUGGESTED TO THEM DURING COMMISSION'S CURRENT MEETING IN WASHINGTON THAT THEY HAVE AT LEAST A CONTINGENT RESPONSIBILITY TO UPDATE SURVEY THEY MADE IN JULY AND AUGUST 1974, BEFORE THEIR REPORT TO OASGA IS CONSIDERED IN JUNE. POINT OF INFORMAL DISCUSSION WITH INTER-AMERICAN COMMISSION'S MEMBERSHIP AT THIS TIME WOULD BE TO HOLD THE DOOR OPEN WHILE WE SOUGHT TO ARRANGE A VISIT BY ITS MEMBERS TO CHILE.

8. LATTER WILL NOT BE EASY. JUNTA HAS BECOME HYPERSENSITIZED TO OUTSIDE CRITICISM OF ITS HUMAN RIGHTS POLICIES, AND HAS SOURED ON USG BECAUSE OF RESTRICTIONS ON MILITARY AND ECONOMIC AID TO CHILE. BUT WE HAVE ONE TRUMP CARD: SECRETARY'S ATTENDANCE AT THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY MEETING. WITHOUT EXPLICITLY PLAYING THIS CARD, IT CAN BE MADE CLEAR THAT THE SECRETARY'S DECISION, WHEN MADE, WILL BE TAKEN ON BASIS OF ALL THE CIRCUMSTANCES THEN PREVAILING.

9. UNDER THIS SCENARIO, WE WOULD SUGGEST TO THE CHILEANS THAT THEY AGREE THAT THE INTER-AMERICAN COMMISSION SHOULD COME TO CHILE SUFFICIENTLY IN ADVANCE OF THE JUNE ASSEMBLY TO OBSERVE HUMAN RIGHTS PRACTICES AS THEY CURRENTLY EXIST IN CHILE, AND REPORT RESULTS TO THE ASSEMBLY. COMMISSION WOULD BE GIVEN SAME FACILITIES TO INTERVIEW GOC OFFICIALS AND POLITICAL PRISONERS AS IT HAD DURING THE LAST ROUND. IT WOULD TAKE INTO ACCOUNT NEW PROTECTIVE LEGISLATION, WHICH CHILEANS ARE JUST NOW BEGINNING TO IMPLEMENT AND WHICH COULD DO MUCH TO IMPROVE TREATMENT OF DETAINEES.

CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 01 SANTIA 01734 02 OF 02 051729Z

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ACTION ARA-06

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7525

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CONFIDENTIAL SECTION 2 OF 2 SANTIAGO 1734

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10. AT SAME TIME, WE COULD ALSO SUGGEST THAT CHILEANS MOVE FARTHER DOWN THE ROAD TOWARD NORMAL CHILEAN CIVIL RIGHTS PRACTICES DURING THE NEXT THREE MONTHS -- FOR EXAMPLE, BY FURTHER REDUCING SEVERITY OF STATE OF SIEGE, ELIMINATING CURFEW, INSURING POSSIBILITY OF RECOURSE TO CIVILIAN TRIBUNALS FOR ALL POLITICAL PRISONERS, AND BRINGING TO TRIAL OR FREEING HUNDREDS OF PRISONERS BEING HELD INDEFINITELY, WITHOUT TRIAL, UNDER STATE OF SIEGE REGULATIONS.

11. IF SUCH AN APPROACH IS TO BE MADE TO CHILEANS, WE OUGHT TO DO IT SOON. GOC GOVERNMENTAL MACHINERY IS EXTRAORDINARILY CUMBERSOME, AND REACTION TIME IS CHARACTERISTICALLY SLOW. ACTING UNDER INSTRUCTIONS, I COULD MAKE PROPOSALS ALONG FOREGOING LINES IN FURTHERANCE OF USG DESIRE TO BRING ABOUT A CONSTRUCTIVE OUTCOME, FOR CHILE'S BENEFIT, AT OASGA. I WOULD SEE PINOCHET PERSONALLY; ANYTHING LESS WOULD DIMINISH FORCE OF THE APPROACH.

12. WE CAN GIVE NO ASSURANCE THAT THE DEMARCHE WOULD BE SUCCESSFUL. IT RUNS COUNTER TO THE THRUST OF PINOCHET'S ADAMANT REFUSAL TO ADMIT THE UN GROUP. UNLESS CAREFULLY HANDLED, IT COULD APPEAR AS A POWER PLAY WHICH CHILEANS STANDING ON THEIR DIGNITY WOULD RESIST. AT THE SAME TIME, WE KNOW THAT THE CHILEANS ARE DOING SOME HARD THINKING ABOUT CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 SANTIAGO 01734 02 OF 02 051729Z

THE PROBLEM. THERE ARE SOME STRAWS IN THE WIND INDICATING THAT SOME RELAXATION MAY BE IN PROSPECT. ACCORDINGLY WE BELIEVE THE ODDS ARE GOOD ENOUGH TO WARRANT THE EFFORT. IF IT FAILED, THE CHILEANS WOULD HAVE NO CLAIM ON US FOR ANY SUPPORT ON THIS ISSUE, AT THE OASGA OR IN OTHER BODIES.

13. AS AN ADDITIONAL BENEFIT, THE APPROACH MIGHT HELP TO HEAD OFF AMB TRUCCO'S DIVERSIONARY INITIATIVE ON HUMAN RIGHTS (STATE 52243).

14. I WOULD APPRECIATE YOUR REACTION TO THESE SUGGESTIONS AT YOUR EARLY CONVENIENCE.
POPPER

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